

preserve in a drawer. When I returned home
I counted
their withered stems: there were twenty, and
over my lips
there passed the gentle warmth of my loved
one's twenty
kisses."¹

The man who has lived with a Laurence —
the creature
who robs youth of all its flame and degrades it
to the mire
—does not afterwards call her his good fairy.
But what-
ever the *limson*, whatever its origin and its
ending, it was
certainly marked by most distressful
circumstances. As
the winter of 1861 approached, Zola's poverty
became terrible. It was then, as he afterwards told Guy de
Maupassant,² that he lived for days together on a
little bread,
which, in Provengal fashion, he dipped in
oil; that he
set himself to catch sparrows from his
window, roasting
them on a curtain rod; and that he "played
the Arab/³"
remaining indoors for a week at a time, draped
in a cover-
let, because he had no garments to wear.
'Not only did
he himself starve, but the girl who shared
his poverty
starved with him; and Paul Alexis and
Maupassant and
"Claude's Confession" relate how, at one
moment of desperation, on a bitter winter evening, after an
unbroken
fast of thirty-six hours, he took off his coat
on the Place
du Pantheon and bade his tearful companion

carry it to
the pawnshop.

" It was freezing. I went home at the run,
perspiring the
while with fear and anguish. Two days later
my trousers

¹ See E. A. YizeteU/s Introduction to "The Fat and the Thin" ("Le
Yentre de Paris") London, 1896. The original appeared
in "Le Figaro,"
November 20, 1866 ; and Zola reprinted portions of it,
altered out of regard
for Ms wife, in "JSTouveaux Contes & Ninon," 1874.

² "Bevue Bleue," March 10, 1883; and "Celebrite*
eontemporaines,"
Vol. I, Paris, 1883. "